



Water Conservation Guide

January 2014

I heard that California is experiencing a drought and Gov. Jerry Brown is asking for a voluntary 20% water reduction across all of California.

What can I do to save water at work?

Most of us use water at work primarily in the bathroom and kitchen, so it's easy to save by simply turning off the faucet when you're not using the water.

In the bathroom:

1. **Turn off the faucet** while you're soaping your hands.
2. **Remember that urinals use less water** than toilets.
3. **Don't use the toilet as a garbage can.**

In the kitchen:

4. **Turn off the faucet** while you're soaping your coffee cup or dish.



Everywhere:

5. **Report leaks:** Help us catch leaks early by calling the 24-hour Building Maintenance hotline at 5-3450 to report broken sprinklers, dripping sinks, or constantly-running toilets.
6. **Buy recycled paper** and other recycled content products. This saves water because less water is needed to make recycled-content materials than to produce them from scratch.

What can I do to save water at home and also save time?



Save time, effort, *and* water with the following tips:

- 1. Wash your car at a car wash**, which uses recycled water.
- 2. Do full loads** of laundry and dishes.
- 3. Leave clippings on the lawn.** And cut grass at highest setting on your mower to help it grow deeper roots.
- 4. Water less—no more than once per week—and water by hand.** Native plants are dormant in the winter and do not need water. If you must water, water individual plants in the cool early morning so the water doesn't evaporate in the heat.
- 5. Don't thaw frozen food under running water.** Put it in the fridge or microwave instead.
- 6. Compost food waste** with backyard or curbside composting rather than use the garbage disposal.

What can I do to save water at home without installing any devices?

You don't have to install a single thing to save water these ways:

- 1. Take shorter showers.** A timer can be helpful if you lose track of time.
- 2. Turn off the faucet** when brushing teeth or shaving.
- 3. Capture water in buckets or a gallon jug** while waiting for it to heat up, and use it to water the garden.
- 4. Don't hose down your driveway.** Use a broom!
- 5. Do some simple tests to check for leaks** in your sprinklers, toilet, and appliances. If you live in EBMUD's service area, you can schedule a free home water audit or order a self-audit kit by calling (866) 403-2683.
- 6. Help water-wasting neighbors** change their ways by calling EBMUD's 24-hour hotline at (866) 403-2683 if you see overwatered lawns or sidewalks being washed with non-recycled water.



What can I do to save a lot of water at home, if I'm willing to do a little set-up?

A few minor changes can keep a lot of water from going down the drain:

- 1. Install a toilet dam** or use a simple brick or filled jug to use less water per flush if your toilet is an older model. This is unnecessary for low-flow toilets.
- 2. Install aerators** on sinks and showers. EBMUD provides free aerators for customers: stop by the district office at 375 11th St., Oakland, go to www.ebmud.com, or call (866) 403-2683.
- 3. Cover pools** to prevent evaporation.
- 4. Prevent evaporation in the garden** with mulch or drip irrigation.
- 5. Consider waterwise landscaping** to replace part of a thirsty lawn. Learn about bay-friendly landscaping at www.loseyourlawn.org.
- 6. Take advantage of hundreds of dollars in rebates** on high-efficiency toilets, washing machines, and lawn conversion and irrigation upgrade projects. Check www.ebmud.com for details.



I've made some changes and am doing my share at home and work. What is the County doing to save water at our facilities?



To conserve California's precious resource, the County is pursuing a number of water conservation strategies. Some examples are:

- 1. Lawn-replacement demonstration projects:** Within the next three months, nearly 50,000 square feet of lawn—about the size of a football field--across three facilities will be replaced with a diverse assortment of native and drought-tolerant plants. The three County facilities are regularly visited by citizens and "lose-your-lawn" materials will be promoted at each site.

2. Water-efficient soil practices: Wood chip mulch and compost amendments to soil are used across multiple County facilities to keep soil moist for longer periods of time. Wood chip mulch acts as insulation for the soil, prevents weeds, and encourages microbial activity that improves conditions for roots to grow deeper into nutrient-regenerative soil. Compost assists clay soils in making water more available to plants while helping sandy soils retain moisture.



3. Smart-technology irrigation: The pilot of soil moisture sensors on a single irrigation zone at Santa Rita Jail and the Juvenile Justice Center was tremendously successful in reducing water use. Funding was recently approved to have a local vendor install the sensors on the entire irrigation system at both sites.

4. Water-wise gardeners: Most County gardeners are Bay-Friendly Qualified Landscape professionals who have been trained in principles of irrigation auditing. Each gardener is equipped with irrigation auditing kits that help them make frequent assessments of the irrigation systems under their care. This helps them immediately identify problems such as water pressure or distribution uniformity—matters if left uncorrected will result in excessive water use.

Who should I call if I see a leak, or if I have suggestions or questions on how to conserve water?

To report leaks, please call the Building Maintenance hotline at x53450 (510-618-3450).

To raise suggestions or questions about water conservation, please call the GSA Sustainability Program Office at x29531 (510-208-9531).



Alameda County
SUSTAINABILITY
Local Action, Global Impact.

Thank You!